

8-2-1861

1861-08-02 Augustus C. Hamlin dispels rumors about his cowardice in battle

Augustus Choate Hamlin

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13.
#4 Corcoran
Aug 2^d 61

Dear Sir

I kind friend informed me today that a story is in circulation and related to you, that I fled from the battle and arrived at Washington at 2 o'clock in the morning ^{most}. In reply I have to state that the convincing proofs of the complete falsity of the story can be given you by many different persons. Furthermore you can have satisfactory evidence that the undersigned was the foremost surgeon in all of the skirmishes and in both battles of Bull Run and when our Reg. was not engaged. I can refer ~~you~~ you to Connecticut officers to the surgeon of the first Mass Vol. to the correspondents of the Tribune, Boston Journal, Mass. News and to many others who were in advance whether there is any truth in this rascally lie. I went into Battle with our boys and remained there for more than two hours exposed to shot, while there was not a surgeon within

a half a mile of me
I left them to get bandages from
Dr Allen. and I remained with
Dr A until the cavalry shot at
me and drove me back to Centerville

There I remained with Dr Green
of Mass. until the Brigade was
ordered back to Falls Church
and until our Hospital Ward
master came along with an Amb-
ulance containing five wounded
and asked me to accompany them

In the darkness and confusion
I could find but few of our Reg-
and I was too exhausted to search
for them and so I continued with the
crowd and remained by the Ambulance
riding on its pillows down hill and
on level ground. At Falls Church
we arrived at about four in the morning
- There I placed the wounded in the
care of Mr Edgerly ordering him to
get every thing ready for all the
wounded who might pass. for I did
not at once think that the main
body of our forces were retreating

I then took the Amb- and rode
about four miles and then hobbled
into Washington arriving there betw-
een six and seven and at eight
o'clock after getting my instruments

[all of our instruments were lost
before the battle commenced by the
Brigade Quartermaster] and started
on my return on foot - after going
about three miles, soldier, told
me that our boys were not going to
Falls Church but to Alexandria

I attempted to get there ^{and} in
doing so I unfortunately met Dr
Farcelon to whom I am indebted
as my friends seem to think
for this villainous story
Evidence will be given you that every
effort was made by me to join my
Reg. that an exhausted man of forty
miles foot travel and thirty hours
fasting could make

Further more if punishment does
not fall upon the author of this
calumnizing it will be because
he is too mean to receive it
The 2d Maine Reg has some
base and contemptible enemies
but ~~she~~ has no such cowards as
they wish to represent

I will also state that the story
trumped up by the same individual
charging Dr Palmer with cowardice
is completely false

I regret to say that among the things

lost by the Brigade Quartermaster
were the valuable books on French
and English Military Surgery -
which I brought on for the benefit
of the boys, costing me about sixty
dollars.

I now understand what an old
surgeon told me in New York
that "Take care of your money and
your courage, for you will never
get credit for either."

Respectfully yours

P.S.

Aug. G. Hamlin

If any man can produce aught
against me or prove that any surgeon
preceded me in any of the Skirmishes
or in the first fight of Bulls Run
or followed more closely his Reg. or
approached nearer to the enemies
batteries in the last battle of
Manassas, then you are welcome
to my salary for benevolent purposes.

A. C. H.

Aug. 2

Ft. Lincoln

Dr. McArthur